

We claim:

1. A method of preventing execution of unnecessary joins  
5 between tables in a database, the method comprising the steps of:
  - 10 a. presenting a Structured Query Language (SQL) statement to the database, the SQL statement having a scope that extends to a set of tables in the database and returning a set of results from the database;
  - b. preparing a list of tables that are within the scope of the SQL statement but that are not referred to by the SQL statement;
  - 15 c. removing tables that must be accessed in order to return the set of results from the list in accordance with a predetermined set of rules; and,
  - 20 d. preventing execution of joins involving any of the tables remaining in the list.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined set of rules includes preventing removal of a table from the list if this table is part of a join chain.
- 25 3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined set of rules includes a rule allowing removal of a table from the list if this table forms the detail table in a join between a master table and a detail table.
- 30 4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined set of rules includes a rule allowing removal of a table from the list if detail item values might not exist in a master table joined to a detail table.
5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined set of rules includes a rule allowing removal  
35 of a table from the list if that table has a mandatory filter.

6. A method according to claim 4, wherein the predetermined set of rules further includes a rule preventing removal of a table from the list that would otherwise be allowed, if the join is an outer join on a master table.

7. A method according to claim 5, wherein the predetermined set of rules further includes a rule preventing removal of a table from the list that would otherwise be allowed, if the join is an outer join on a master table.

8. A computer program comprising computer program code means adapted to perform the steps of claim 1 when said program is run on a computer.

9. A computer program product comprising program code means stored on a computer readable medium for performing the method of claim 1 when said program product is run on a computer.